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EXAMINER

THOMPSON JR, FOREST

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3625

DATE MAILED: 04/30/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

**Office Action Summary**

Application No.

09/497,373

Applicant(s)

ALON ET AL.

Examiner

Forest Thompson Jr.

Art Unit

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 05 February 2003.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 2-4,6,8-19,21-23,25,27-39,56-61,64-77 and 80-89 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 2-4,6,8-19,21-23,25,27-39,56-61,64-77 and 80-89 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 03 February 2000 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120**

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 8.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Response to Amendment***

1. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action (See Paper No. 6). The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not otherwise provided in a prior Office action will be included in this action where appropriate.
2. Amendment A filed on 02/05/2003 (see Paper #7) has been entered. Amendment A added new claim 89; amended claims 2-3, 6, 8-9, 11-14, 17-19, 21-22, 25, 27-31, 33-34, 36-39, 56, 74, and 81; and canceled claims 1, 5, 7, 20, 24, 26, 40-55, 62-63 and 78-79. Claims 2-4, 6, 8-19, 21-23, 25, 27-39, 56-61, 64-77, and 80-89 are pending.
3. Claims 2-4, 6, 8-19, 21-23, 25, 27-39, 56-61, 64-77, and 80-89 have been examined.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

4. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:  

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.
5. Claims 21-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being incomplete for omitting essential structural cooperative relationships of elements, such omission amounting to a gap between the necessary structural connections. See

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MPEP § 2172.01. The omitted structural cooperative relationships are: dependent claims 21 and 22 both recite "The method of claim 26" in line 1. Applicant has deleted dependent claim 26. Correction is required.

Claim 23 is depending from dependent claim 22. Therefore, the same rejection is applied. Correction is required.

6. Claims 27-35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Applicant states "the requirements list including a requirement that more than buyers in the group have a common employer" in lines 8-9 on pg. 6 of Paper #7. Examiner cannot determine the intended bounds for applicant's claim. Correction is required.

Claims 28-35 depend from the rejected claim 27. Therefore, the same rejection is applied. Correction is required.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

7. Claims 1-35, 40-41, and 44-86 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Shkedy (U.S. Patent No. 6,260,024). Applicants' amendment has overcome this rejection. Therefore, examiner has withdrawn this rejection.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

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8. Claims 36-39, 42-43, and 87 were rejected in Paper #6 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shkedy (U.S. Patent No. 6,260,024) and further in view of Pallakoff (U.S. Patent No. 6,269,343). Applicants' amendment required examiner to amend the rejection of these claims. Therefore, examiner has modified the rejection of these claims (see below).

9. Claims 36-39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shkedy (U.S. Patent No. 6,260,024), and further in view of Pallakoff (U.S. Patent No. 6,269,343).

Claim 36. Shkedy discloses:

- (a) a first portion that specifies a product/service for purchase by a group comprised of more than one buyer (col. 4 line 60 –col. 5 line 25);
- (b) a second portion that specifies a collective request by the group to the purchase of the product/service (col. 4 line 60 –col. 5 line 25);
- (c) a third portion that requests price information for the product/service from the seller (col. 5 lines 7-25; col. 6 lines 3-17).

Shkedy does not explicitly disclose a fourth portion that specifies a time interval for which the collective request remains active, a fifth portion that specifies at least a minimum sales quantity of the product/service for which a price information is requested; nor a sixth portion that verifies that buyers in the group satisfy a membership requirement of having a common employer. However, Pallakoff discloses:

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- (d) a fourth portion that specifies a time interval for which the collective request remains active (Abstract; col. 1 lines 53-67); and
- (e) a fifth portion that specifies at least a minimum sales quantity of the product/service for which a price information is requested (col. 1 lines 53-67; col. 11 lines 25-37).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Shkedy to disclose a fourth portion that specifies a time interval for which the collective request remains active, and a fifth portion that specifies at least a minimum sales quantity of the product/service for which a price information is requested, as disclosed by Pallakoff, for the motivation of facilitating a sales transaction for purchasing a product/service.

Shkedy does not specifically disclose a sixth portion that verifies that buyers in the group satisfy a membership requirement of having a common employer. Shkedy does disclose verifying that buyers in the group satisfy a requirements list (col. 7 lines 5-8), in the disclosure of Cryptographic protocols are provided to authenticate the identity of buyers and/or sellers and verify the integrity of buyer and seller communications with the central controller 200. Therefore, it would have been obvious that the system could establish any desirable requirements that suit the system's goals and objectives to verify the integrity of buyers, including requiring a plurality of buyers in the group to have a common employer. And, thus, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the disclosure of Shkedy to specifically require verifying that buyers in the group satisfy a requirements list that requires a

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plurality of buyers in the group to have a common employer.

Claim 37. Shkedy discloses (g) a seventh portion that specifies price information provided by a competing seller of the product/service (col. 6 lines 18-28; col. 7 lines 49-58).

Claim 38. Shkedy does not specifically disclose (g) a seventh portion that specifies a number of buyers in the group. However, Pallakoff does disclose (g) a seventh portion that specifies a number of buyers in the group (col. 4 lines 2-4), through the functionality of this field may also indicate how many individual buyers have thus far indicated a desire to buy the product. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the disclosure of Shkedy to disclose (g) a seventh portion that specifies a number of buyers in the group, as disclosed by Pallakoff, for the motivation of facilitating a sales transaction for purchasing a product/service.

Claim 39. Shkedy discloses transmission of buyer data to the seller in an integral transmission (col. 5 line 7 – col. 6 line 17). Pallakoff discloses transmission of buyer data to the seller in an integral transmission (col. 4 line 42col. 5 line 45). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the disclosure of Shkedy to specifically disclose the first through sixth portions are configured for transmission to the seller in an integral transmission, as disclosed by the combination of Shkedy and Pallakoff, for the motivation of facilitating a sales transaction for purchasing a product/service.

10. Claims 2-4, 6, 8-9, 14-19, 56-61, 64, 68-73, and 89 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shkedy (U.S. Patent No. 6,260,024), and Official Notice.

Claim 2. Shkedy discloses the agent entity is one of a buyer in the group or the group (col. 5 lines 43-45).

Claim 3. Shkedy discloses collecting payment information from the at least one buyer in the group who is interested in buying the product/service at the received suggested price quotation; and sending the collected payment information to the at least one seller (col. 5 lines 61-67).

Claim 4. Shkedy discloses the payment information is in the form of a credit card number for the at least one buyer in the group who is interested in buying the product/service (col. 6 lines 30-52).

Claims 6, 8, 89. Shkedy discloses:

- receiving into the computer requests to purchase the product/service by buyers of the group (col. 4 line 60 – col. 5 line 25);
- forming a collective request for purchase of the product/service based upon the received buyer requests to purchase the product/service (col. 4 line 60 – col. 5 line 25);
- sending the collective request to at least one seller (col. 5 lines 7-25; col. 6 lines 3-17);

- receiving a suggested price quotation for the product/service from the at least one seller (col. 6 lines 18-28);
- notifying an agent entity of the received suggested price quotation (col. 7 lines 27-33);
- receiving another suggested price quotation for the product/service from the at least another seller (col. 3 lines 51-57); and
- receiving purchase authorization from at least one buyer in the group to buy the product/service from one of the at least one seller or the at least another seller (col. 5 lines 43-60).

Shkedy does not specifically disclose allowing at least another seller to review the received price quotation for the product/service from the at least one seller, nor notifying an agent entity of the received suggested another price quotation. However, Official Notice is taken that allowing prospective sellers to review competitors' bids to supply one or more products was old and well known in the art at the time the invention was made. This is a common practice when the process is based on an auction scheme (e.g., a "Dutch" auction). In this process, the seller offering the best deal for the buyer wins the right to supply the product/service to the buyers while promoting a least price that the buyer has to pay. Part of this process (e.g., in the Dutch auction) is to publish the potential sellers' bids, which encourages competitive prices from sellers and participation by potential buyers. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of applicant to specifically allow at least another seller to review the received price quotation for the

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product/service from the at least one seller, and notify an agent entity of the received suggested another price quotation, as disclosed by old and well known art, for the motivation of using a computer to facilitate a sales transaction for purchasing a product/service by a group of buyers from a seller of a plurality of sellers.

Shkedy does not specifically disclose verifying that buyers in the group satisfy a requirements list that requires a plurality of buyers in the group to have a common employer;. Shkedy does disclose verifying that buyers in the group satisfy a requirements list (col. 7 lines 5-8), in the disclosure of Cryptographic protocols are provided to authenticate the identity of buyers and/or sellers and verify the integrity of buyer and seller communications with the central controller 200. Therefore, it would have been obvious that the system could establish any desirable requirements that suit the system's goals and objectives to verify the integrity of buyers, including requiring a plurality of buyers in the group to have a common employer. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the disclosure of Shkedy to specifically require verifying that buyers in the group satisfy a requirements list that requires a plurality of buyers in the group to have a common employer.

Claim 9. Shkedy discloses sending the collective request to the at least one seller further comprises a price reduction request for the product/service based on a number of buyers in the group (col. 5 line 31 – col. 6 line 39; col. 10 lines 11-25).

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Claim 14: Shkedy discloses the computer is connected to an electronic network and wherein the received requests to purchase the product/service are received over the electronic network (col. 4 line 60 – col. 5 line 6).

Claim 15: Shkedy discloses the electronic network is at least one of the World Wide Web, the Internet, or an intranet (col. 5 line 61 – col. 6 line 17).

Claim 16: Shkedy discloses the received requests to purchase the product/service are received in a secured format (col. 7 lines 5-12).

Claim 17: Shkedy discloses:

- the computer is connected to an electronic network (col. 1 lines 8-12); and
- the received suggested price quotation for the product/service is received over the electronic network (fig. 8 [810]; col. 16 line 62 – col. 17 line 22).

Claim 18. Shkedy discloses providing the agent entity with pre-negotiated prices for the product/service from the at least one seller (col. 7 lines 26-42).

Claim 19. Shkedy discloses notifying the agent entity of the received suggested price quotation comprises sending a message to the agent entity in a format of at least one of an e-mail message, an Internet immediate message, a voice message, a beeper message, or a facsimile message (col. 6 lines 18-28; col. 7 lines 26-42).

Claim 56. Claim 56 is written as a system and contains essentially the same limitations as claim 6; therefore, the same rejection is applied.

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Claim 57. Claim 57 is written as a system and contains essentially the same limitations as claim 6; therefore, the same rejection is applied.

Claim 58. Claim 58 is written as a system and contains essentially the same limitations as claim 3; therefore, the same rejection is applied.

Claim 59. Claim 59 is written as a system and contains essentially the same limitations as claim 4; therefore, the same rejection is applied.

Claim 60. Claim 60 is written as a system and contains essentially the same limitations as claim 6; therefore, the same rejection is applied.

Claim 61. Claim 61 is written as a system and contains essentially the same limitations as claim 6; therefore, the same rejection is applied.

Claim 64. Claim 64 is written as a system and contains essentially the same limitations as claim 9; therefore, the same rejection is applied.

Claim 68: Claim 68 is written as a system and contains essentially the same limitations as claim 14; therefore, the same rejection is applied.

Claim 69: Claim 69 is written as a system and contains essentially the same limitations as claim 15; therefore, the same rejection is applied.

Claim 70: Claim 70 is written as a system and contains essentially the same limitations as claim 16; therefore, the same rejection is applied.

Claim 71: Claim 71 is written as a system and contains essentially the same limitations as claim 17; therefore, the same rejection is applied.

Claim 72: Claim 72 is written as a system and contains essentially the same limitations as claim 18; therefore, the same rejection is applied.

Claim 73: Claim 73 is written as a system and contains essentially the same limitations as claim 19; therefore, the same rejection is applied.

11. Claims 10-13, 25, 65-67, 74-77, and 80-88 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shkedy (U.S. Patent No. 6,260,024), and further in view of Pallakoff (U.S. Patent No. 6,269,343) and Official Notice.

Claims 10, 11, 12, 13. Shkedy does not specifically disclose the price reduction request further includes a preexisting group discount rate of the at least one seller, the received suggested price quotation is based on a number of buyers in the group, and receiving into the computer a group buy setup characteristics data set that includes at least one of price targets for the product/service, buyer deadlines for joining the group, buyer deadlines for submitting purchase authorization, deadlines for closing the sales transaction, and providing a setup tool that facilitates receiving group buy setup characteristics data that includes at least one of price targets for the product/service, buyer deadlines for joining the group, and buyer deadlines for receiving purchase authorization. However, Pallakoff discloses the price reduction request further includes a preexisting group discount rate of the at least one seller, the received suggested price quotation is based on a number of buyers in the group, and receiving into the computer a group buy setup characteristics data set that includes at least one of price targets for the product/service, buyer deadlines for joining the group, buyer deadlines for submitting purchase authorization, deadlines for closing the sales transaction, and

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providing a setup tool that facilitates receiving group buy setup characteristics data that includes at least one of price targets for the product/service, buyer deadlines for joining the group, and buyer deadlines for receiving purchase authorization (col. 3 line 28 – col. 4 line 8). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the disclosure of Shkedy to specifically disclose the price reduction request further includes a preexisting group discount rate of the at least one seller, the received suggested price quotation is based on a number of buyers in the group, and receiving into the computer a group buy setup characteristics data set that includes at least one of price targets for the product/service, buyer deadlines for joining the group, buyer deadlines for submitting purchase authorization, deadlines for closing the sales transaction, and providing a setup tool that facilitates receiving group buy setup characteristics data that includes at least one of price targets for the product/service, buyer deadlines for joining the group, and buyer deadlines for receiving purchase authorization, as disclosed by Pallakoff, for the motivation of facilitating a sales transaction for purchasing a product/service by a group of buyers from a seller of a group of sellers.

Claim 25. Claim 25 is written as a method and contains essentially the same limitations as claims 6 and 8; therefore, the same rejection is applied. Shkedy also discloses providing buyer payment information to the at least one seller (col. 6 lines 30-40). Shkedy does not specifically disclose the claimed features of receiving from at least one seller at least one of an agreed price for the product/service or a price

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reduction for the product/service for at least one group size; nor monitoring the group to determine if the group has attained the at least one group size. However, Pallakoff discloses:

- receiving from at least one seller at least one of an agreed price for the product/service or a price reduction for the product/service for at least one group size (col. 3 lines 5-40);
- monitoring the group to determine if the group has attained the at least one group size (col. 3 line 37 – col. 4 line 6);
- providing buyer payment information to the at least one seller if the group attains the at least one group size (col. 12 lines 16-36).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the disclosure of Shkedy to specifically receive from at least one seller at least one of an agreed price for the product/service or a price reduction for the product/service for at least one group size; monitor the group to determine if the group has attained the at least one group size; and provide buyer payment information to the at least one seller if the group attains the at least one group size, as disclosed by Pallakoff, for the motivation of facilitating a sales transaction for purchasing a product/service.

Claim 65. Claim 65 is written as a system and contains essentially the same limitations as claim 10; therefore, the same rejection is applied.

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Claim 66. Claim 66 is written as a system and contains essentially the same limitations as claim 11; therefore, the same rejection is applied.

Claim 67: Claim 67 is written as a system and contains essentially the same limitations as claim 12 or 13; therefore, the same rejection is applied.

Claim 74. Claim 74 is written as a system and contains essentially the same limitations as claim 25; therefore, the same rejection is applied.

Claim 75: Claim 75 is written as a system and contains essentially the same limitations as claim 21; therefore, the same rejection is applied.

Claim 76: Claim 76 is written as a system and contains essentially the same limitations as claim 22; therefore, the same rejection is applied.

Claim 77: Claim 77 is written as a system and contains essentially the same limitations as claim 23; therefore, the same rejection is applied.

Claim 80: Shkedy discloses said computer is configured to restrict buyers in the group to buyers matching a requirements list (col. 25 lines 49-61).

Claim 81: Claim 81 is written as a system and contains essentially the same limitations as claim 8; therefore, the same rejection is applied.

Claim 82: Claim 82 is written as a system and contains essentially the same limitations as claim 13; therefore, the same rejection is applied.

Claim 83. Shkedy discloses the purchase request receiver is connected to an electronic network and wherein the purchase request receiver is further configured to receive requests to purchase the product/service over the electronic network (col. 4 line 60 – col. 5 line 6).

Claim 84. Claim 84 is written as a system and contains essentially the same limitations as claim 15; therefore, the same rejection is applied.

Claim 85. Claim 85 is written as a system and contains essentially the same limitations as claim 16; therefore, the same rejection is applied.

Claim 86. Shkedy discloses the payment provider is connected to an electronic network and wherein the payment provider is further configured to provide the payment information to the at least one seller over the electronic network (col. 5 lines 61-67).

Claim 87. Shkedy does not specifically disclose a group-buying notifier configured to notify at least one buyer in the group that the group has attained the at least one group size. However, Pallakoff discloses a group-buying notifier configured to notify at least one buyer in the group that the group has attained the at least one group size (col. 4 lines 21-24), in the functionality of The process begins with a seller making an offer to sell a particular product at specified prices which depend upon the amount of the product that can be sold in a particular time period. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Shkedy to disclose a group-buying notifier configured to notify at least one buyer in the group that the group has attained the at least one group size, as disclosed by Pallakoff and old and well known art, for the motivation of facilitating a sales transaction for purchasing a product/service.

Claim 88. Claim 88 is written as a system and contains essentially the same limitations as claim 19; therefore, the same rejection is applied.

***Response to Arguments***

12. Applicant's arguments filed 08/09/2002 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. The arguments and examiner's response follow:

**Applicants argue**, on pg. 14-16, that Shkedy does not disclose that sellers can review information, such as bids, submitted by other bidders.

**Examiner agrees.** Shkedy does not specifically disclose that sellers can review information, such as bids, submitted by other bidders. However, Official Notice is taken that this type of information disclosure was old and well known in the art at the time the invention was made (see section ). Auctions have used this type of disclosure to increase interest in auctions and encourage bidding by prospective buyers.

Therefore, examiner rejects applicants' claim.

**Applicants argue**, on pg. 15-16, that Shkedy does not disclose restricting membership to buyers having a common employee.

**Examiner disagrees.** Shkedy does disclose verifying that buyers in the group satisfy a requirements list (col. 7 lines 5-8), in the disclosure of *Cryptographic protocols are provided to authenticate the identity of buyers and/or sellers and verify the integrity of buyer and seller communications with the central controller 200*. Therefore, it would have been obvious that the system could establish any desirable requirements that suit the system's goals and objectives to verify the identities and/or integrity of buyers, including requiring a plurality of buyers in the group to have a common employer. And,

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thus, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the disclosure of Shkedy to specifically require verifying that buyers in the group satisfy a requirements list that requires a plurality of buyers in the group to have a common employer.

Therefore, examiner maintains the rejection.

**Applicants argue**, on pg. 15-16, that Shkedy does not restrict membership in buying groups to buyers having a common employer, as per claims.

**Examiner disagrees.** Examiner has modified the specific rejection. Shkedy provides functionality that encompasses restricting membership in buying groups to buyers having a common employer. See the rejection of claims 6, 7, and 89 at pg. 7 above.

Therefore, examiner maintains the rejection.

**Applicants argue**, on pg. 16-17, against the combination of the Shkedy and Pallakoff references to reject applicants' invention.

**Examiner disagrees.** Examiner contends that both Shkedy and Pallakoff disclose aspects of on-line buying and selling of products and services to buyers who may be grouped together for the purpose of accomplishing the sale. Therefore, examiner considers that these references are compatible prior art. While they do not disclose identical inventions, they do disclose aspects of applicants' invention, as disclosed in the rejection above (see sections 7- above).


Therefore, examiner maintains the rejection of applicants' claims.


**Conclusion**

13. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Forest Thompson Jr. whose telephone number is (703) 306-5449. The examiner can normally be reached on 6:30-3:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Wynn Coggins can be reached on (703) 308-1344. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 305-7687 for regular communications and (703) 305-7687 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-3900.

  
F. Thompson  
April 21, 2003

  
Jeffrey A. Smith  
Primary Examiner